

- Public Comment Period Extended 30 Days -

Goshen, NY – Today U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will grant his request for an extension of to the public comment period on the Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge (WRNWR). USFWS is extending the public comment period for thirty days, until April 9, 2008.

Last week, the USFWS approved Congressman Hall's request for a public hearing at the Warwick Town Hall on the Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the WRNWR, which was held on Thursday March 6. The public comment period was originally set to close Monday, March 10, only days after the hearing.

"I am glad the Fish and Wildlife Service is showing a willingness to listen to the concerns of residents and area farmers by holding a public hearing and extending the public comment period," said Congressman Hall. "People who were unable to attend the hearing or who have additional comments deserve to be heard and they need an appropriate amount of time to respond."

A significant expansion of the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge has been proposed throughout the New York and New Jersey portions of the refuge. While two public hearings were scheduled in New Jersey as part of the USFWS's study process, none were originally scheduled in New York.

The USFWS has identified additional areas surrounding the current boundaries of the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge as "biologically significant land" in its Land Protection Plan. In Orange County, parts of Minisink and the Black Dirt Region of Warwick have been proposed for acquisition.